

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION  
MAKING, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RE-NAMING OF THE  
CITY OF PRETORIA**

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**MINOR-DISSERTATION**

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## **DECLARATION STATEMENT**

I herewith declare that I am the original author of this minor-dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Social Impact Assessment. I have taken all the professional ethics into account in acknowledging all the sources of reference and authors used for building the scientific base of my research. This work has not previously been submitted to any other university.

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## **ABSTRACT**

It is true that public participation processes in local government do not produce the outcomes that reveal a fully optimised process. The aim of the study was to bring about a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, in particular, with regard to the possible extent to which they feel they participated in discussions pertaining to the re-naming of Pretoria. This was achieved by way of a literature review and an analysis of the data collected during the focus groups. The methodological approach that was used by the researcher was a qualitative one, and purposive and snowball techniques were instrumental for the identification of participants.

In chapter 1, the topic of the study is introduced and the background to the study, the research problem, the design and methodology as well as the outline of the chapters is explained. In chapter 2, the concept of public participation is discussed within the context of the local government. The role and involvement of the public in decision making is discussed, as well as public participation in other countries and how these relate to South Africa. The discussion is positioned within the broader context of Dahrendorf's theory of conflict. Chapter 3 deals with the research design and methodology used to research the topic of this study. In chapter 4, the presentation of research findings is given, according to the themes that were used during data collection and analysis. The study shows that the respondents were unhappy about the manner in which the renaming of Pretoria was conducted. They were of the opinion that the municipality could have done better in terms of advertising and informing them about the process so that they could participate. The last chapter focuses on the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter. The researcher makes some recommendations based on the gaps that he identified on the findings. The study has some limitations which are also discussed.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction and background to the study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Jenkins (2007: 193) is of the opinion that name changes of cities, towns, provinces and public places was triggered by the un-banning of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1990. One of the major towns to have its name changed after South Africa's first democratic elections was Stanger in KwaZulu-Natal. Stanger's Transitional Local Council took a decision in 1998 to change the name to KwaDukuza without conducting public participation. As a result this perpetuated conflict between the council and the community, more especially the businesses as they had to change their signboards and letterheads (Jenkins, 2007: 150). Although the name KwaDukuza was officially approved in 2005, it has been used since 1998, just like the name Tshwane was used to replace Pretoria, whereas it has not been officially approved.

The name change of Pretoria to the city of Tshwane is a very topical issue in political circles and communities at large. *Beeld* newspaper reported that the ANC has decided that the historic name of Pretoria should be replaced with Tshwane. William Baloyi, the mayoral spokesperson, was quoted saying "Our city's name has to reflect its history and the area was known as Tshwane long before it became known as Pretoria" (Fitzpatrick, 2003). In 2005 the ANC-governed city of Tshwane Metropolitan Council decided to change the name of the City of Pretoria to Tshwane. The opposition political parties and some communities objected to the name change because the municipality did not make use of any form of public participation. Pretoria is Pretoria! With this slogan the residents of the Jacaranda City want to protest against the decision by the Tshwane metro council's mayoral committee to change the city's name to



Tshwane (Slabbert, 2003). Tony Leon, the then leader of the opposition party, was quoted in the Pretoria News saying that 'the ANC was using the name change issue to distract attention from its failure to deliver basic services' (Jenkins, 2007: 158).

The City of Tshwane came into existence after the demarcation of the municipal borders and the amalgamation of various municipal areas into one metropolitan area. The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM), classified as a category A urban municipality, was established following the re-demarcation of various municipalities and councils that had previously served the Greater Pretoria and surrounding areas. The municipal area includes Pretoria, Centurion, Akasia, Soshanguve, Mabopane, Atteridgeville, Ga-Rankuwa, Winterveld, Hammanskraal, Temba, Pienaarsrivier, Crocodile River and Mamelodi. The area is inhabited by approximately 2, 2 million people (Tshwane IDP, 2005: 12). The map below shows the areas constituting the City of Tshwane.

Map: 1 Areas constituting the City of Tshwane



Source: Tshwane IDP 2005 Revision Cycle no.3

The year 2000 heralded a new era for all the communities that reside within the boundaries of Tshwane. As a result the City of Tshwane was formed on the foundations to become the leading African capital city of excellence that empowers its residents to prosper in a safe and healthy environment. The CTMM is an organ of the state within the local sphere of government exercising legislative and executive authority within its area of jurisdiction, as determined in terms of Municipal Demarcation Act 1988. The CTMM is divided into 76 municipal wards, and the focus of this study was on one of the wards, and each ward has its own ward committee, which makes recommendations on any matter affecting the ward.

The study was conducted in Pretoria Central which is part of Ward 3. In 2004, the number of residents in Ward 3 was about 39 006. More than half of them are black, and 48% are white (Erasmus, 2004: 87). Pretoria Central was the preferred area of study because it was one of the areas most affected, as its businesses could incur some costs, for example, changing of letterheads, with regard to the re-naming process. The geographical area that was the focus of this study is bordered by the following streets: Skinner in the south to Boom in the north, and D.F Malan in the west to Nelson Mandela in the east.

A social impact assessment will therefore provide important data on the residents' and business owners' perceptions of the impact that the renaming of the city had had on the community.

## **1.2 Background**

After South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, the formation of new municipalities in 2000 created an opportunity for the public to participate in the naming and re-naming of places. A social impact assessment that involves the community was found to be important, because it minimises local resistance to proposed projects and policy decisions, which subsequently minimises the risk of

major planning disasters (Vanclay & Bronstein, 1995: 33). Taking as a point of departure Ralph Dahrendorf's classical theory of conflict (Wallace & Wolf, 1980: 122), which argues the existence of an inherent tendency for conflict in society, which explains why one could argue that in most, if not nearly all cases, where renaming of towns, public places, and streets has led to conflict as a result of a lack of public participation. Dahrendorf (Ritzer 1988: 229) goes on to say that within every organisation, those in dominant positions seek to maintain the status quo, while those in subordinate positions seek change. The interests of superordinates and subordinates are objective, in the sense that they are reflected in the expectations attached to positions.

Social impact assessments are designed to manage the exacerbation or mitigation of the nature of the conflict that may arise. The importance of social impact assessments has, therefore, been evident in cases where the changing of names of public places was proposed. For example, after the Limpopo Provincial Geographical Names Committee announced that Makhado would be the new name for Louis Trichardt, the Hlanganani Concern Group, comprising Tsonga people, complained that consultation was not wide enough. They said that Makhado was divisive because it only reflected the wishes of Bavenda people (Jenkins, 2007: 156). The non-involvement of the community in the renaming process led to conflict between the Council and the community because of their different views in terms of decisions made. This conflict was perpetuated by rivalries that existed between different parties who perceived the existence of conflicting interests in respect of each of their positions, as each group strives to do well for itself.

The conflict theoretical approach and the importance of the use of social impact assessments are appropriate for this study focussing on the perceptions and experiences of the public with regard to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. Although the municipality is using the name Tshwane, it has not been officially changed by the Minister of Arts and Culture, who is responsible for the approval

of name changes. Having given the background of the study, the researcher will now discuss the research problem.

### **1.3 Research problem**

Service delivery is supposed to take place at local government level, and therefore local government is expected to interact with residents and numerous role players in identifying the true needs of communities, which ultimately results in the promotion of general welfare and quality of communities. The apartheid system prevented the majority of people from effectively participating in matters which interested and affected them in their daily lives (Tshwane IDP, 2005). Now that the constitution of South Africa gives the right to every citizen to take part in public decision making, this study looked at peoples' perceptions and experiences with regard to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria.

The moral obligation of any government is to develop the potential of its citizens to the fullest. South Africa has three levels of government, namely the national, provincial, and local (municipal level) government. These levels of government are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The government institutions that are closest to the people are the local authorities, where service delivery is supposed to take place. It is on this level where people would express their dissatisfaction pertaining to the services rendered or not rendered by their local authorities. This has been evident in the past years, because communities in some municipalities have been demonstrating against their local authorities for better and improved services (Muller, 2005).

The re-naming of City of Pretoria is one specific issue that lies on local government level. Many local residents and business owners have raised their concerns about the fact that the municipality has insufficiently publicised the need for the public to partake in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. By 'insufficiently publicised,' it is meant that the whole process of re-naming the city

was not well communicated to the public. Although public involvement in the debate around the re-naming of the City of Pretoria was publicised in newspapers, few other efforts were made to involve the public by means of a social impact assessment. A petition drawn up by the Democratic Alliance was, for example, signed by 15,000 people objecting to the name change. Smangalis Mkhathshwa, the then Tshwane mayor, suspended the process shortly afterwards because of public pressure (Slabbert, 2003).

Two broad research questions regarding the involvement of communities in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria to Tshwane are addressed in the research. These questions are aimed at bringing about a better understanding of:

- The perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents and business owners with regard to the impact the re-naming of the City of Pretoria may have on them.
- The extent to which Pretoria Central residents and business owners feel that they have been given the opportunity to participate in discussions related to the re-naming of the city.

#### **1.4 Rationale**

The re-naming of towns, public places, and streets in South Africa is a very topical issue in the sense that almost every municipality wants to re-name whatever they perceive as not representing the community. With the re-naming process there is always a type of conflict between the municipal council and some constituents as well as the opposition political parties. The researcher embarked on this study to understand the level of public involvement with regard to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. In addition, data was collected about the extent to which ward 3 residents feel that they have been given the opportunity to be involved in the debate surrounding the re-naming of the city. Such a social

impact assessment would provide valuable information to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality.

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

The researcher looked at public participation from the South African perspective in relation to legislation and its implementation at municipal level. This study also looked at how public participation was conducted in other countries as compared to South Africa. The main purpose of the study was to research the perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents about their involvement or lack thereof in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. To achieve this task the researcher therefore employed a methodological approach that was qualitative in nature. Focus groups were used for data collection and purposive and snowball techniques were instrumental in the identification of participants.

Findings of the study were discussed in accordance with themes identified during data collection and analysis. The themes identified can be listed as:

- public participation and decision making,
- relationship with the municipality,
- name change,
- political motives, and
- the way forward.

A detailed discussion of the themes is given in findings chapter. Based on perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, it is evident from the findings that there was a conflict between the municipality and the community, because of the fact that there was no public participation conducted before the name change. The respondents were of the opinion that the name change was about political dominance and driven by political motives. Under the theme “way forward”, the respondents suggested the position that should be taken by the municipality to address some of the deficiencies identified.

The researcher made recommendations based on the findings of the study. As discussed in the literature review, it is clear that the municipality has the required processes in place, as confirmed by Houston *et al.* (2001) in their document that was used by the researcher for content analysis. The recommendations made were based on the fact that the municipality did not adhere to their own rules in the re-naming of Pretoria. Some of the recommendations are that: citizens be regarded as significant role players in the planning process of the municipality, and that the municipality ensure that ward committees are active, so that community members would be able to voice their concerns. More details about the recommendations are discussed in chapter 5. The study had some limitations, as the name change is a topical issue and as it is sensitive to the council. More details are discussed in the last chapter of this thesis. A brief outline of chapters of the minor dissertation is given in the next section.

### **1.6 Chapter outline**

Chapter 2 gives an exposition and understanding of the concept of public participation within the context of local government. This chapter identifies and briefly discusses the different forms of public participation. The discussion will be placed within the broader context of Dahrendorf's theory of conflict.

Chapter 3 deals with the research design and methodology used to research the topic of this study. The chapter also explains the method used in the selection of respondents and the data collection techniques used.

In chapter 4, the presentation of research findings is given. The findings are discussed according to the themes used during data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 focuses on the conclusion and recommendations, which were based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter. Limitations of the research are also dealt with in this chapter.

The literature studied by the researcher will now be discussed.





## **Chapter 2**

# **Public involvement in decision making: A literature overview**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This study was about understanding the perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents regarding the level of their participation in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria, and therefore this chapter reviews the variables that influence public participation in decision making. It also explores the ideological grounding of participation in South African municipalities. Other areas of inquiry that will be helpful in understanding the environment of the subject field lie in the broad area of community development, participatory democracy, and decision-making, within which public participation exists.

In this chapter, a general overview is given of the meaning of public participation, the role of the government in public participation, public participation in local government, involvement of the public in decision making, and the forms and methods of public participation. The relevance of public participation within each phenomenon is indicated, and now attention will first be given to the meaning of public participation.

### **2.2 Meaning of Public Participation**

Participation appears to be an even broader concept than decision-making. It starts well before the decision in question is made, and extends well beyond it. Acts of participation should not be viewed in isolation, but should rather be seen

within a stream of interconnected acts. Participation may mean different things to different people.

Public participation in decision-making was greatly stimulated as a result of modernization, which had gathered strength in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gradually western countries introduced wide participation of the population in general elections, and their citizens started to expect a share in decision-making in political affairs (Becker, 1997: 154). Planned changes during the economic crisis of the 1930s resulted in public participation at grassroots level.

Becker (1997: 155) is of the opinion that public participation is the process of involving the public in the decision-making of an organization. This can be brought about through either consultation or involvement. Consultation includes education, information-sharing, and negotiation, the goal being better decision-making by the organization consulting the public. Public involvement tries to bridge the gap between participatory and representative democracy by allowing individuals some opportunity to influence decisions normally decided by higher authorities. For example, when Pietermaritzburg changed its street names, the manner in which consultation took place was systematic and unhurried. The street names were selected in a careful manner and they represented their local history and commemorated the people of different races who contributed to the development of Pietermaritzburg (Jenkins: 2007: 140).

Johnson in Bekker (1996: 41) defines citizen participation as a “process wherein the common amateurs of a community exercise power over decisions related to the general affairs of a community”. It can be stated that these “common amateurs” are persons without paid office, wealth, special information, or other formal power sources beyond their own numbers, and that they are non-elite citizens who gain some control from the participation process itself.

Participation can therefore, be defined as an activity undertaken by one or more individuals previously excluded from the decision-making process in conjunction with one or more other individuals who were previously the principal leaders in that process. For citizens to really take part in a participation scheme, they require some kind of explicit or subtle bargaining over issue definition, available options, resource to carry out decisions, and final choices (Bekker, 1996: 1). For the purpose of this study, public participation can be defined as purposeful activities in which people take part in relation to the local authority area of which they are legal residents (cf. Bekker, 1996: 132). The role of the state in public participation will now be discussed.

### **2.3 The role of the state in public participation**

The South African Constitution requires the state to play a significant role when it comes to public participation, because all the provincial legislatures are required to facilitate public participation (Chapter 10 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996). As a result, the state has different programmes at national, provincial, and local levels that are meant to encourage the public to participate in policy issues and decision-making. The government has taken necessary steps to involve the people in the formulation and implementation of development plans and programmes which affect them. In South Africa, the legislatures may not exclude the public and media, unless it is reasonable and justified to do so in an open and democratic society. The state has to play a significant role in public participation, and therefore the researcher will now discuss participatory democracy.

#### **2.3.1 Participatory democracy**

The basic characteristics of democracy should be actualized in local government institutions (Clapper, 1993: 52). The importance of citizen participation in terms of the continued existence of democracy can clearly be seen when the ancient

concept of democracy is considered. Clapper (1993: 52) states that while it may seem to be non-existent in many societies (like was the case in the re-naming process in Tshwane) citizen participation, is not a new phenomenon.

Participatory democracy emphasizes the importance of participation in all aspects of public life for the development of man's individual capacities, which implies that by associating with others in the pursuit of a goal, the individual benefits in many ways. Furthermore, it is not only the individual who gains, but the community also gains through a sense of shared purpose (Clapper, 1993: 52). Participatory democracy provides a mechanism and expression for populist ideals of organizing people and for making them aware of their situation (Kay, 1970: 200). The concept of democracy and its relationship to participation will now be discussed.

#### (a) The concept of democracy

The concept of democracy originates from two Greek words: *demos*, meaning "the people" and *kratein* meaning "ruling power", and originally referred to the type of government in which the power to rule resided in the people. The word refers to the governmental system of the city-states of Athens and Sparta at the time of Pericles. Under this system, all important decisions affecting the citizens of Athens were made directly by the *ekklesia*, which was the face-to-face assembly of all citizens. The outstanding characteristic of Athenian democracy, also known as participatory democracy, was public control of public decisions and maximum public participation in making the decisions and in holding public office (Clapper, 1993: 50).

Another characteristic of the old city-states is that they were small and homogeneous and therefore accommodated widespread direct popular participation in day-to-day government, something well-highly impossible in today's growing and complex communities (Masango, 2001: 42).

The problem with the direct approach of democracy, which may require face-to-face interaction among the participants, is that it cannot accommodate today's complex local governments, particularly modern cities, since it would among other reasons be difficult, if not impossible, to successfully organize meetings which all residents and workers could attend (Masango, 2001: 42).

Normally only a few members of any institution are actively involved in the functioning of that particular institution. This active and influential minority of individuals constitute an "elite" and they fulfil the basic tenets of democracy by indirect participation for the masses, i.e. representative democracy, rather than participatory democracy (Masango, 2001: 44). This argument can be linked to Ralph Dahrendorf's theory of conflict where he said that society is held together by enforced constraint meaning that some positions are delegated power and authority over others (Ritzer, 1988: 228).

#### (b) Principles of democracy

For the purpose of this study, the definition of democracy suggested by Ranney (1975) will be used, as it emphasizes the importance of citizen participation in government activities. Ranney (1975: 307) defines democracy as:

A form of government organized in accordance with the principles of popular sovereignty, political equality, popular consultation, and majority rule.

This definition highlights four principles which indicate that public participation is an indispensable component of democracy. To highlight the relationship between citizen participation and democracy, a brief elaboration on these principles will be given:

(i) Popular sovereignty

Ranney (1975: 307) argues that, “The principle of popular sovereignty requires that basic governmental decision-making power be vested in all members of the community, and not in any particular person or ruling class.”

“Public” should be understood as all members of a particular community who fulfil specific basic criteria, such as capability, loyalty, willingness, and other proper and generally agreed-upon standards. This does not, however, imply that all qualifying people will personally or directly make all governmental decisions. The public may delegate their decision-making power to whomever they may wish, such as legislators, executives, judges, or others. Direct involvement of all the members of the public in the making of all governmental decisions is practically impossible, especially in complex society like ours.

Popular sovereignty exists wherever and whenever the people have the vested power to make final decisions on what decision-making powers should be delegated, to whom, for how long, and under what conditions of accountability (Ranney, 1975: 307). This can be linked to Dahrendorf’s argument that those who occupy positions of authority are expected to control subordinates and because authority is legitimate, sanctions can be brought to bear against those who do not comply (Ritzer, 1988: 229).

Popular sovereignty therefore is derived from public participation. In the South African local government sphere, this becomes evident during local government elections in which the electorate elects councillors to represent it in the municipal council, which, in terms of section 151(3) of the Constitution of the RSA (Act 108 of 1996), has the right to govern the local affairs of the community (Masango, 2001: 45).

### (ii) Political equality

The principle of political equality requires that all members of the community possess equal opportunities to participate in the political process, whatever this process may entail (Ranney, 1975: 308). However, political equality neither implies nor requires equal participation of the people. Its main focus is on the equality of opportunities or treatment given to the people in the political process (Ranney, 1975: 309). Therefore, variations in the levels of participation have no bearing on the principle of equality.

### (iii) Popular consultation

The principle of popular consultation requires that the decisions on which public policies best promote the people's interests must ultimately be taken by the people themselves and not by legislators or public officials (Ranney, 1975: 309). Therefore, in a democratic country there should be a mechanism through which legislators and public officials should consult the people in order to find out which policies the people want adopted and enforced. It was reported in the media that "Tshwane has resolved to begin a public process to consult all people. If the residents want the name to remain Pretoria, we will support that; if they want to change it we will support that as well". William Baloyi, the then speaker of the mayor, said the aim of renaming the city would solely be to unite the people of the area (Fitzpatrick, 2003).

Hence, through a certain method of participation, people would have to indicate which policies they wanted adopted and enforced, otherwise popular sovereignty would not exist, and subsequently the democratic process would collapse. Popular consultation should therefore create a climate conducive to continuous public participation. Such a climate would also contribute towards ensuring that the public policies preferred by the people and not by public officials, are implemented (Ranney, 1975: 309).

#### (iv) Majority rule

For democracy to prevail, the will of all people, and not only that of the majority, would have to prevail. However, the decision-making process in a democratic government mostly entails choosing from among alternative views as supported by different groups, parties, or individuals among the people (Ranney, 1975: 310).

All factors remaining equal, the solution as to which group will 'win' is determined by the principle of majority rule, which requires that as long as at least 50% plus one of the people determine and approve the procedures taken to arrive at government decision, and as long as the same proportion of the public can revise the said procedures, then the principle of majority rule, and hence democracy, has been satisfied (Clapper, 1993: 58). The researcher will now look at the examples of public participation in other countries to see if there is anything that South Africa can learn from them.

#### **2.3.2 Public participation in other countries**

Trends and developments in the international arena have been reviewed and suggest that public participation is an idea whose time has come. There appears to be a fundamental shift towards more participatory forms of decision-making. This is a movement towards new definitions of democratic governance and its relations with civil society. This section offers a few examples, such as Canada, Germany, and Uganda, that may be of interest when compared to the South African situation.

##### (a) The Canadian example

In democracies such as Canada, public participation in government decisions is now a regular feature of political life. Public participation became a feature of public policy in Canada since the 1960s and 1970s, and today decisions by



government without public consultation are the exception rather than the rule (De Villiers, 2001).

There are numerous examples of public participation in Canada. For example, one of the mechanisms used by government has been to confer public participation rights under specific legislation. The deliberations that resulted in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1988 (CEPA) are of particular interest in this regard. Some of the principles included in the CEPA are as follows: the right to a healthy environment; improved access to the courts to prosecute and to sue where one's right to a healthy environment has been infringed upon, increased public participation in government decision-making; improved monitoring and reporting to the public on the state of the environment; and increased government responsibility and accountability for the environment. The involvement of the public in matters related to the CEPA is an integral part of the success of this Act. Under the CEPA, the opinion of the public is highly regarded to the extent that "an individual who is a resident and at least 18 years old may apply to the minister for an investigation of any offence under this Act that the individual alleges has occurred" (De Villiers, 2001).

#### (b) The German example

In Germany, legislation derives from a number of sources such as government programmes, the administration, court rulings, association of trade and industry and interest groups, local authorities, and as a result of public discussion in the mass media. Specialists divisions in the ministries receive and monitor potential issues for legislation and invite interest groups to attend discussions with a view to exchanging views and information (De Villiers, 2001).

These groups do not act arbitrarily on behalf of a few individuals, but in principle represent the interests of broader social groups. This prior consultation is considered more efficient than first drawing up provisions which may later prove

to be ill-founded or impossible to implement. It also means that interest groups can influence a Bill before it reaches the lawmakers (De Villiers, 2001).

The influence of interest groups is extended into the legislative process. Indeed, the legislature is considered to be dependent on the expertise, opinions, and concerns of those potentially affected by the planned legislation. Taking these interests into account has become routine procedure in the German legislature. Both the executive and legislative process depends heavily on expertise. There are experts in every relevant field, many appointed by the government to provide specialist advice on a wide range of topics. The German legislature introduced the so called 'extended' public committee meetings. These are held only in connection with the final debate, after which the committee makes its recommendation. Public participation in Germany focuses heavily on the role of experts, and their model tends to entrench a participatory democracy for and of the elite (De Villiers, 2001). The researcher is of the opinion that this form of participation cannot work in South Africa. Public participation in South Africa focuses on empowering the poor and the marginalized groups. Every citizen has the right to express his or her opinion and to be heard by the government.

#### (c) The Ugandan example

In Uganda, where public participation in the planning process is guaranteed by the Constitution, the majority of the citizens do not influence budgetary processes and policy formulation. In order to address this problem, both central and local government have introduced initiatives to broaden the scope of public participation. The Ugandan Participatory Poverty Project (UPPP) was a three-year process that sought to bring the perspectives of poor Ugandans into the formulation through consultations and the implementation of policies and planning for poverty reduction at both district and national levels. This participation has given people a sense of dignity that their views really matter in the democratic organization of society (Moehler, 2001: 1).

The project was implemented in 1998, and involved consultations with the poor in both urban and rural areas. Not only has the resulting information been incorporated in the Poverty Eradication Plan, it has also influenced budget allocations. For example, as a result of communities identifying access to clean water as a priority, a higher weight was given to the provision of safe water supply in budgets at central and district levels (De Villiers, 2001). The researcher is of the opinion that the South African (SA) government can learn a thing or two from the Ugandan participatory process. If the SA government could invest time and resources in order to broaden the scope of public participation to all communities, they would have done commendable work. For instance with the proposed street renaming in Durban, the public was not consulted, and they protested, demanding that the city should rather focus on initiatives that will bring tangible developments to the poorest communities. If their cry could be heard, that would mean a lot to them.

### **2.3.3 South Africa: Legislature and public participation**

South Africa is a representative parliamentary democracy in which the voters elect citizens to represent them politically in the legislatures at the three levels of government: the national, provincial, and local spheres. The functions of government are divided amongst the three following spheres (Heyns, 1996: 3):

- In the national sphere, the voters support political parties who appoint a few people (members of parliament) to represent their views at the highest level. At this level, the government is exclusively responsible for several functions that affect the country as a whole, such as safety and security, defence, and home affairs. The government has a further responsibility to develop policies that guide service delivery in other spheres, as well as to monitor and support the implementation of these policies (Heyns, 1996: 3).
- In the provincial sphere, the electorate of each of the nine provinces votes for political parties, who appoint a few people (members of provincial

legislatures) to represent them in the provincial legislatures. These legislatures make their own laws on certain provincial matters, subject to national laws and policies. The provincial government has the primary responsibility for social service delivery and implementing programmes to deliver a broad range of services directly to their populations. Policies on issues where there are significant regional differences are developed at this level (Heyns, 1996: 3).

- In the local sphere, the local electorate votes political parties and for individual candidates to represent them in city, town, or rural councils. These local councils make by-laws and policies for the local area which they govern, subject to national and provincial laws. The local government is responsible for the delivery of basic services, such as electricity, water, and sanitation services. At this level, the government is also responsible for a variety of municipal functions such as building regulations, municipal planning, fire-fighting services, and many other services (Heyns, 1996: 5). Public participation for the renaming of the City of Pretoria should have taken place at this level.

The constitution provides for three categories of municipalities, namely metropolitan, district, and local councils. South Africa has nine metropolitan municipalities, and the City of Tshwane is one of them. Metropolitan councils may decentralize powers and functions, such as the original municipal, legislative, and executive powers vested in them. In metropolitan areas, there is a choice of two types of executive systems: the mayoral executive system where executive authority is vested in the mayor, and the collective executive committee where these powers are vested in the executive committee. The City of Tshwane uses the mayoral executive system (Burger, 2007).

The Constitution requires all three levels of government to co-operate with each other in mutual trust and good faith. In addition, the national legislature must

pass laws to facilitate this co-operation. The national legislature has exclusive powers to make laws in certain areas, and it shares legislative power with the provincial legislature in others (Heyns, 1996: 3).

Parliament is the legislative arm of the government. Ordinary citizens may be able to influence the kind and content of laws passed if they know where they can make suggestions or interventions. To do this, they need to understand the legislative process (Heyns, 1996: 37). Before any bills could be drafted, a department may choose to first spell out its policy on issues in public. It may do this in a White Paper or a Green Paper. This optional step is taken to inform people outside Parliament about its views, to consult with them and to get comments and suggestions from interested people and people with expertise in the field. Ordinary citizens and civil society groups can also make their voices heard regarding any legislation. They can influence the final form of the bill before it becomes an Act by making their inputs. All bills must be published in the Government Gazette for the public to comment on within three weeks. Thereafter, the bill is tabled to the National Assembly, and then referred to the relevant parliamentary committees for recommendations and proposed changes, if any (Heyns, 1996: 38).

#### (a) The role of the executive

Lawmaking has its roots in policy. In pursuing the argument that participation by the public must extend beyond that of simply casting a vote at election time, it follows that the executive must engage with the public when drawing up and formulating policy. The Constitution obliges the executive to respond to the needs of the people and to encourage the public to participate in policy making. It has been argued in South Africa too that it is at the policy making and legislative drafting stages that the public input may prove most valuable. This is, after all, when the aims and objectives of the legislation are established and when the mechanisms to achieve them are mapped out (Heyns, 1996: 36).

The publication and dissemination of Green and White Papers help promote public involvement in policy formulation. Public involvement in policy formulation and the subsequent drafting of legislation makes it more likely that laws will be respected and obeyed. Certainly, the public participation processes followed by the Constitutional Assembly during the drafting of the Constitution appear to have resulted in a founding document that is widely accepted and used (Heyns, 1996: 38).

#### (b) Petitions as an aspect of public participation

The right to petition government generally is recognized in section 17 of the Constitution:

Petitions allow individual or groups to raise issues in a formal way without having to go through a particular member of the legislature. They are useful mechanisms for unorganized sectors of society to come together to raise particular issues for consideration by the legislative authority.

The Gauteng legislature has formalized the opportunity to petition the legislature by passing the Petitions Act of 1998. The legislature has established a Public Participation and Petitions Unit and a Standing Committee on Petitions and Public Participation. Petitions are regarded as an important channel for public input after legislation has been passed. Petitions provide a means whereby public comment on, and experience with regard to existing legislation, regulations, and processes may be entertained or revisited (Besdziek, n. d).

#### **2.3.4 The role of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) in terms of public participation**

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is constitutionally mandated to represent provinces in the national sphere, and local government is also represented in the national sphere by the NCOP. The NCOP is not there to oversee all of national government; but rather has to exercise oversight over the

national aspects of provincial and local government. Its goal in doing this is to contribute to effective government by ensuring that provincial and local concerns are recognized in national policy making and that provincial, local, and national governments work together effectively (De Villiers, 2001).

The role of the NCOP and provinces in assuring legislation is a case in point. Section 76 bills offer provinces the greatest opportunity to influence law and policy on socio-economic transformation. Section 76 bills are bills that affect the provinces and that relate to areas of shared national and provincial legislative powers. When section 76 bills are considered, each province has one vote. The NCOP must refer section 76 bills to the provincial legislatures and the amendments proposed by each province must be considered. The fact that the NCOP must obtain a mandate on some national legislation in itself opens up a significant opportunity for public participation. National legislation has been debated in the provinces, giving the public the opportunity to influence national policy in the provincial legislatures.

However, concern has been raised about the amount of time allowed to provincial legislatures and the NCOP when dealing with section 76 bills, and the impact this has on public participation. Usually, provinces have a relatively short period of four weeks to give feedback to the NCOP. This puts considerable pressure on provincial legislatures which must not only mandate their NCOP delegations in line with the requirements of section 76, but which may wish to arrange an extensive public participation process before doing so (De Villiers, 2001).

#### (a) The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

The opportunity for national representation of the views of citizens was increased by the passage of the Organised Local Government Act, which created the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). Each of the nine provincial local



government associations nominates up to six delegates to a national pool, from which SALGA's national executive selects delegates to participate, depending on the issues arising from legislation. The significance of SALGA was emphasized by Mohammed Bhabha of the NCOP:

Clearly the status of local government has been elevated to that of a key player in government. It has become an intrinsic element of policy-making in this country. This is in recognition of the key role that local government will play in the development of the country and in the deepening of participatory democracy. It stands as a monument to the ideals for which our people fought to ensure that their voices, however humble, will be heard, no matter how hallowed the corridors of power may be (De Villiers, 2001).

#### (b) Public participation and provincial legislatures

The approach that the NCOP has adopted on public participation is that this should take place in the provincial legislatures. Thus, decisions made by the legislatures should be informed by the views of the public in each particular province. The two biggest difficulties that provinces face are resources and time. As noted above, the four-week cycle demands very tight planning, and hardly affords the time to prepare for large-scale public participation. At an NCOP workshop in November 1998, provinces called on the NCOP to play a coordinating role concerning public participation. It has become clear that public participation in the NCOP cannot succeed without an extensive public education programme (De Villiers, 2001).

Provision is made for municipal delegations to represent the interests of local government in the NCOP when necessary, but municipal representatives may not vote. The NCOP and any of its committees also have the power to summons anyone to give evidence or produce documents, and may request any individual or institution to report to them. Local government is the form of government that is closer to the people and this is where public participation should take place, as described in the following section.



## **2.4 Public participation in local government**

Some good models for participatory development have emerged, as a result of municipality partnerships with structures of civil society. There have also been several interventions by donor communities in providing assistance for developing appropriate communication and public participation mechanisms (IDP Guide1, Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000).

Local government ward committees or sub-councils have been created as advisory bodies comprising municipal and community representatives to channel community needs and recommendations to council. These committees were elected so that they could respond to the needs of the local community. The reasons for the existence of municipalities will be discussed below.

### **2.4.1 Mandate of the municipalities**

A municipality is an organ of the state within the local sphere of government exercising legislative and executive authority within an area determined in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998. It functions in its area in accordance with the political, statutory, and other relationships between its political structures, political office bearers and administration and its community (IDP Guide1, Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000).

Houston, Humphries, Liebenberg and Dichaba (2001: 207) argue that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) mandates local government to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. A fundamental aspect of the local government system is the active engagement of communities in the affairs

of municipalities of which they are an integral part, and in particular in planning, service delivery, and performance management.

The council of the municipality, within the municipality's financial and administrative capacity and having regard to practical considerations, has the duty to:

- provide democratic and accountable government, without favour or prejudice,
- encourage the involvement of the local community
- strive to ensure that municipal services be provided to the local community in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner
- provide members of the local community with equitable access to the municipal services to which they are entitled
- promote and undertake development in the municipality
- promote a safe and healthy environment in the municipality

(Houston *et al.* 2001: 239).

#### **2.4.2 Integrated development planning and public participation**

Integrated development planning (IDP) is defined as “A participatory approach to integrate economic, sectoral, spatial, social, institutional, environmental, and fiscal strategies in order to support the optimal allocation of scarce resources between sectors and geographical areas and across the population, in a manner that provides sustainable growth and the empowerment of the poor and the marginalized” (IDP Guide<sup>1</sup>, Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000).

The White Paper on Local Government requires that municipalities be developmental in the way they provide services to its communities. As a tool to assist municipalities in carrying out their developmental mandate, the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000 (MSA) requires municipalities to have Integrated Development Plans. The IDP process requires that communities be involved in

the development of their communities throughout all the IDP phases, with the aim of “deepening democracy” (IDP Guide 1, DPLG, 2000). Integrated development planning aims to align varying community needs with the activities of Municipal Departments, in order to maximize the use of limited resources for developing the city.

As a way of illustrating that some of the requirements were not always adhered to by the council, Willie Spies, the spokesperson of the Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus) said his party has approached the court because the Tshwane metro council has contravened at least three laws, which consist of the Municipal Systems Act, the Municipal Finance Management Act, and the National Heritage Resources Act, in pursuing the renaming of streets. To show the kind of conflict that exists between the political parties, the FF Plus said they would ask the court for an interdict preventing the implementation of the council's decision to rename the streets until public participation in the process was complete (Magome: 2008).

#### (a) Development of a culture of community participation

A municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance, and for this purpose must –

(i) Encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including:

- the preparation, implementation, and review of its IDP
- the establishment, implementation, and review of its performance management system
- the monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance
- preparation of its budget
- strategic decisions relating to the provision of services.

(ii) Contribute to building the capacity of:

- the local community
- councillors and staff to foster community participation (IDP Guide 1, DPLG, 2000).

#### (b) Adoption of IDP

Each municipal council must, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, adopt a single, inclusive, and strategic plan for the development of the municipality which:

- links, integrates, and co-ordinates plans, and takes into account proposals for the development of the municipality,
- aligns the resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the plan, and
- is compatible with national and provincial development plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislations.

An integrated development plan adopted by a municipal council in terms of section (1) may be amended in terms of section 34, and will remain in force until an integrated development plan is adopted by the next elected council.

Each municipal council, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term, must adopt a process set out in writing to guide the planning, drafting, adoption, and reviewing of its integrated development plan. The municipality must, through appropriate mechanisms, process, and procedures, consult the local community before adopting the process. A municipality must give notice to the local community of particulars of the process it intends to follow (IDP Guide 1, DPLG, 2000).

#### (c) Status of IDP

An integrated development plan adopted by the council of a municipality –

- is the principal strategic planning investment which guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development in the municipality.
- binds the municipality in the exercising of its executive authority, except to the extent of any inconsistency between a municipality's integrated development plan and national or provincial legislation, in which case such legislation prevails; and
- binds all other persons, to the extent that those parts of the integrated development plan that impose duties or affect the rights of those persons have been passed as a by-law.

### **2.4.3 Ward committees**

Ward committees are established in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) in each ward boundary of the Municipality. The City of Tshwane currently has seventy six (76) ward committees established in accordance with a total number of wards. Ward committees are mainly advisory committees which can make recommendations on any matter affecting the ward.

The main role of the ward committee is to make sure that voters are involved in and informed about council decisions that affect their lives. The ward committees should be set up in such a way that it can reach most sectors and areas in the ward. The ward committee's main tasks are to communicate with and consult the community in respect of development and service plans. It has no formal powers however, to force the council to do anything. The council should provide support, for example by providing publicity for meetings, and by financially supporting ward committees to do their work. Ward committees can play an important role in creating a democratic culture of local participation and accountability (IDP Guide 1, DPLG, 2000).

#### (a) Purpose of the ward committee

The purpose of the ward committee is

- to obtain better participation from the community in council decisions
- to make sure that there is more effective communication between the council and the community
- to assist the ward councillor with consultation and to report back to the community (Government Gazette No. 32 of 2000 Local Government).

#### (b) Role of the ward councillor

A ward councillor is directly elected to represent and serve the people in a specific ward. The ward councillor should make sure that the interests of the people in the ward are presented as properly as possible. The ward councillor should be in touch with the issues in the area, should understand the key problems, and should monitor development and service delivery. In committees, a caucus and council meeting, the ward councillor is the direct link between the council and the voters. He/she makes sure that voters are consulted and kept informed about council decisions, and about development and budget plans that affect them (Government Gazette No. 32 of 2000 Local Government). The ward councillors play a vital role in the involvement of the communities in decision making, as dealt with in the next section. Tshwane municipality has some guidelines that they have to follow when naming public places, and this is discussed below.

#### **2.4.4 Procedural guidelines for naming public places in Tshwane**

All matters concerning the naming of public places should be referred to the South African Geographical Names Council (SAGNC) for recommendation and approval by the Minister of Arts and Culture. Any applications for a name must include sufficient information about the name (origin, meaning, pronunciation) and the reason for wanting the name.

All names must be presented to the community for their acceptance. Depending on the circumstances, names must be presented to the community through the ward committee, through the local press, or through a questionnaire on which signatures are to be affixed. The ward councillors should invite the members of the existing Public Place and Street Names Committee in Tshwane to ward committee meetings as observers. All names must be referred to the Public Place and Street Names Committee, which evaluates and considers the names. The Public Places and Street Names Committee must forward its recommendations to the Council for consideration and approval. The relevant municipal department, Telkom Ltd, the Surveyor-General and the Postmaster-General, as well as the applicant, must be notified immediately of an approved name (Tshwane Policy Guidelines, 2002: 135).

The integrated development plan (IDP) involves new and complex governance and planning processes for South African local authorities. In the following section, the IDP process to be implemented by the municipalities will be discussed.

### **2.5 Involvement of the public in decision making: Focusing on the key principles**

In South Africa, as in many other countries of the world, public participation is a legal requirement in respect of developments considered to have potentially negative impacts. The principles relating to the people to be involved are identified as the principles of capacity building, representation, transparency, and diversity. These principles seek to ensure that the public participation process be inclusive of interested and affected parties; that diversity be recognised and be properly managed, and that the main groups of stakeholders make arrangements for their representation in order to streamline the process. Principles relating to involvement techniques address the complex issues of physically reaching people identified as the interested and affected parties, and of taking note of and

considering their (i.e. the public's) opinion, in order to render the participation adequate and effective (Makara, 2001: 7).

### **2.5.1 Capacity building**

Capacity building is the active empowerment of role players, so that they clearly and fully understand the objectives of public participation, and may in turn take such actions or conduct themselves in ways that are calculated to achieve, or lead to, delivery of the objectives. Capacity building may take the form of imparting knowledge to role players on the one level, but may also require that role players who had been empowered with knowledge are availed of appropriate material resources and other incentives, in order to provide their input into decision making (Makara, 2001: 9).

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and community representatives need to be trained on how public involvement enriches decision-making. It is important for them to be able to draw the link between their participation and the resultant decision. The creation of a conducive environment for NGOs to engage the state is a key requirement for holding government accountable to the people (Mpondo, 2004).

As opposed to accepting the plight of the poor as a given and finding the right technique, capacity building requires strengthening their organisation and financial capacities so they are not just recipients of services and beneficiaries. They should be supported and prepared to own and manage assets and activities in a sustainable manner. Dependency and welfare-orientated approaches may not help. Government and industry should intensify job creation efforts and poverty alleviation projects. Government bears the primary responsibility to ensure that communities be exposed to education and awareness training, and to ensure that communities facilitate this, to the extent necessary, by participating (Makara, 2001: 9).



A critical part of empowerment is the ability to streamline participation and communication through the establishment and management of community forums. All inclusive public participation may be nebulous, costly, and almost impossible, unless the communities are organised into representative community forums through which public participation processes can be conducted. The communities are to be assisted to appreciate not only their initial role in public participation, but also that their role may be rendered more meaningful through organisation into properly managed forums through which they can be contained to provide their input into processes. To achieve this eventual efficiency and develop sustainable interactions, substantial up-front investments are needed to build the skills and systems that enable the forums eventually to take over the management of the process on behalf of the community. The forums must be empowered to deal generally with environmental and community safety, health, and developmental matters. They must be empowered to engage with industry and the authorities on behalf of their constituents, with whom they are expected to consult on an ongoing basis (Makara, 2001: 9). This follows Dahrendorf's argument that once conflict groups emerge, they engage in actions that lead to changes and developments in social structure (Ritzer, 1988: 230).

### **2.5.2 Representation**

This principle seeks to ensure that all relevant interests be represented in a public participation process, so that all relevant viewpoints be taken "on board". This representation requirement is echoed under a number of other pieces of legislation including the National Water Act 36 of 1998, which provides for water management institutions established under the Act to have appropriate community, racial, and gender representation. The Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), and other social organisations are always helpful when representing the interests of the affected community. In practice, it may be difficult or impossible to be assured

that representatives do have legitimate mandates. In such cases the community is to be assisted, as part of capacity building, to enhance the human resources and local institutions needed to prepare them to manage local institutions and to enter into responsible consultations with project proponents. These skills bolster streamlining and efficiency of public participation, and should prove to be beneficial for future processes (Makara, 2001: 8).

### **2.5.3 Transparency**

Transparency is required for all role players in a public participation process. The project proponents have to ensure that both the process and the proceedings are not inadvertently lacking in transparency. The communicator should never assume that the communities understand the rationale for public involvement. Highly technical material has to be adequately simplified, as a first step, to render it accessible to non-technical participants. This should have the effect of an icebreaker to bring everyone on board, to broaden the ownership of the process, and to make everyone feel comfortable with active participation (Makara, 2001: 11).

The authorities are also obliged to be transparent in terms of acknowledging any capacity or other constraints they have and which may impact deadlines. The communities, NGOs, and CBOs are likewise required to be transparent, not only in relation to the process, but also to the project at hand. Any concerns of the community, even if not relevant to the process at hand, must be made known to either the developer or the authorities (Makara, 2001: 11).

### **2.5.4 Diversity**

Diversity refers to the difference associated with race, gender, religion, ethnicity, language, age, economic status and sexual orientation among others. In a public participation process, these differences are often represented by the divergent

viewpoints and opinions. Since the object of public participation is not to seek consensus, but rather to enrich decision-making, sensitivity towards diversity issue will ensure that all main messages are adequately captured. Successful diversity management reinforces ownership of the public participation process by all role players, and therefore enhances the integrity and credibility of the process. Knowledge about these issues could also be used to make informed decisions about what actions need to be taken to render the process more accessible (Makara, 2001: 8). For public participation to happen in a meaningful manner, different forms and methods should be employed, as discussed below.

## **2.6 Different forms and methods of public participation**

In this section, different forms and methods of public participation that relate to community involvement will be discussed. Participation can have different meanings for different groups, as a result of a variety of forms and methods of participation. The forms and methods discussed below are used by the municipality for its public participation process.

### **2.6.1 Forms of public participation**

Two forms of public participation, namely public hearing and community participation, will be discussed below. These forms of public participation are more appropriate for municipalities in engaging with their various communities, as they are widely used for this purpose. For example Khorombi Dau, who is the speaker of the council, said the process to rename the streets in Pretoria would take the form of public meetings, written submissions, and public hearings (Masemola and Levanon: 2008).

#### **(a) Public hearing**

In local governments, the form of active citizen participation in public decision-making involves the formal public hearing, during which citizens are afforded the

opportunity to express their views and to question officers. State administrative procedures acts require that administrative agencies hold public hearings prior to issuing rules and regulations or prior to undertaking specific projects (Meyer & Theron, 2000: 47).

Public hearings do not change the locus of decision-making authority, but may induce public officers to modify their original proposals and views. Officers must give serious consideration to the expressed views of citizens, or the public hearing will be little more than a pro-forma consultation ritual (Meyer & Theron, 2000: 47).

#### (b) Community participation

Community participation can be defined as “the actual act of taking part in or involvement of community members in specific community activities” (Bayat and Meyer, 1994: 156). Members of the community can participate as individuals or as members of groups. According to Bayat and Meyer (1994: 156), community members can participate in activities such as decision-making during project planning or the implementation and sharing of the benefits of public services. The main feature distinguishing community participation from other types of participation is the fact that participants must be members of the said community.

### **2.6.2 Methods of public participation**

For the purpose of this study, only three methods will be discussed, as they are the ones that are commonly used at municipal level. The methods that will be discussed are: consultation, committee meetings, and voting.

#### (a) Consultation

Public consultation refers to a process of communication between the government and the governed in dealing with a particular issue (Craythorne, 1997:98). Furthermore, consultation can also be defined as a means of seeking

advice or information (Webster Dictionary, 1995: 210). Consultation therefore is a method of participation in which information is provided and the views of participants are elicited. Such participation can occur through, among other means, the use of questionnaires, public meetings, and surveys (Benwell, 1980: 74).

#### (b) Committee meetings

A committee is a formally constituted body that comprises people who have been appointed or elected to examine or deal with a particular matter (Webster Dictionary, 1995: 197). When committee meetings are used as a method of participation, representatives of relevant groups are required to serve on committees that deal with matters that concern such groups. Committee meetings are interactive forms of participation among members who are capable of understanding in-depth discussions about the matters under consideration (Benwell, 1980: 75).

#### (c) Voting

Voting could be described as a process through which the electorate choose from candidates who are all eligible for a certain vacancy. This is the way public representatives in a democratic country are normally elected as political office bearers and members of parliament (Meyer and Theron, 2000: 52).

The right to vote probably is the only political right that the majority of people in the world exercise. An election is the main formal mechanism of political participation in the modern world. In an election, the individual can vote for a new political party to be the lawful policy-making body of the country. Researchers could even use the opinions, perceptions, and reactions of society as a tool to analyse policy, and to evaluate how effective and efficient specific policies are.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The definition of public participation that was used for the purpose of this study clearly states that people should take part in the activities of their local municipality. It is therefore crucial for the municipality to do its best to involve the communities in public participation, as it is a requirement in terms of South African constitution.

The state plays a significant role in terms of public participation, and as a result, it has different programmes at all levels of government that encourage public participation in decision making. The basic characteristics of democracy should be actualized at local government level where delivery of services and capacity building of communities should happen. South Africa has three levels of government, namely national, provincial and local spheres. The concentration was on local government because the municipality falls into this category of government. The three levels of government should co-operate with each other, although the delivery of basic services is the responsibility of local government.

Local government is mandated to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to encourage residents to participate in matters of the local government. Communities could participate in local government through their involvement in the IDP system. There are various forms and methods of public participation which are used to engage with communities on different matters. Dahrendorf is of the opinion that many different factors do intervene in the process of conflict, for example, technical conditions such as adequate personnel and political conditions such as overall political climate (Ritzer, 1988: 230).

Houston and colleagues (2001:272) argue that the most important strength of the IDP process was that it enabled ordinary citizens to play a role in the planning process. Although the municipal processes are in place, the municipalities

experience many challenges in the implementation of these processes. The most significant problems identified by Houston and his colleagues in their study were the inadequate consideration given to the IDP reports by the City Council; the limited participation of councillors in the process; conflict between community and councillors; the lack of resources for community participation process, and the implementation of IDP projects (2001:272).

Houston *et al.* (2001:197) are of the opinion that the overwhelming majority of South Africans have very limited knowledge of mechanisms for public participation in the legislative process and of the functions of political structures. They argue that knowledge of political processes and institutions, as well as attitudinal factors such as apathy and feelings of political efficacy have a considerable impact on public participation in legislative processes in South Africa (Houston *et al.*, 2001:199).

Jenkins (2007: 193) argues that onomastics, the theoretical study of names, suggests that the name changes are to some degree unnecessary, since over a period of time, the literal meaning of a proper name is lost. As a matter of fact the meaning of some place names are unknown, and certainly, in many cases, unknown to some people. The research methodology used in this study is qualitative and is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Researching the public participation in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria: The research design**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The main purpose of this study was to get people's perception about public participation in local government decision making with special reference to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. For this reason, the methodological approach used to gain information for the above purpose was qualitative in nature. This chapter will include giving an overview of the methods used in collecting, coding, analysis and interpretation of the data.

### **3.2 Methodological Approach**

The research methodology was qualitative and exploratory in nature. Qualitative analysis does not tend to highlight any generalization, because every experience observed is subjective and unique to the process of trying to get a deeper and more meaningful understanding into the phenomenon being studied (Neuman, 2003: 391).

An important feature of the qualitative methodology, which contributed to choosing this methodology, is the level of depth that the researcher goes into when studying his or her respondents. It is important in this study not to make abstractions or deductions from the respondents, but to gain a deep and proper understanding of the theme of the study as well as views given to you by the people one has approached (cf. Neuman, 1997: 331-332). The researcher did



not use quantitative methods, because this method would not have allowed the respondents to freely express their perceptions and experiences. The other contributing factor for not choosing the quantitative method is that it would have been time consuming and expensive for the researcher. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 3) argue that a quantitative study focuses on control of all the components in the actions and representations of the participants, and the study is guided with a focus on how variables are related. The researchers' focus was on depth rather than quantity for this study.

By using a qualitative approach, an attempt was made to understand the respondents' experience in relation to public involvement in decision making, with special reference to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. A detailed account of how the respondents were selected is given in the following section.

### **3.3 Population and sampling**

In this study, the research population were individuals living and working in Pretoria Central, whose geographical area is bordered by the following streets: Skinner in the south to Boom in the north and D.F Malan in the west to Nelson Mandela in the east. A population or universe refers to the large pool of cases from which the researcher desires to investigate and to draw conclusions. However, this is an abstract concept as it can never truly determine all the elements within a large population (Neuman, 2003: 216). To define a population, a researcher specifies the unit being sampled by defining their specific characteristic that is being studied. For the purpose of this study, the characteristic taken into consideration was that the participants should at least have lived in Pretoria Central for a minimum of twelve months and still be residing there at the time of the research, or that the participants had to be working within the city centre or be students at Higher Education Institutions around Pretoria or living in Pretoria central. In terms of age categories, the participants were between the ages of 22 and 54 years, which were broken down

according to focus groups. All the business people had to have their businesses in the city centre, which had to be operational at the time of the research.

Non-probability sampling was used for the purposes of this study. Babbie and Mouton (2002: 166) argue that social research is often conducted in situations where one cannot select the kind of probability samples used in large-scale social surveys. This type of sampling was chosen because the study focussed on the relevance of the research topic rather than the representation which determines the way in which respondents are selected (Neuman, 2003: 211). In this sampling method, not everyone in the target population had an equal chance of being included in the study. During the sampling process, the researcher identified three individuals who complied with the characteristics to be included in the research. (They are Pretoria Central residents working in town and within the specified age category). These individuals were approached to participate in the study and were thereafter asked to identify people with similar characteristics that they thought would be useful for focus groups.

The types of non-probability sampling that were used in this study were, therefore, purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a kind of sampling used for special situations (Neuman, 2003: 213). The researcher opted for these types of sampling, as it was not easy to get access to the block of flats in Pretoria Central during the day, as most occupants of these flats were at work or out busy with their commitments. The researcher wanted to do an in-depth investigation about the perceptions and experiences of people with regard to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria; hence purposive sampling was chosen (Neuman, 2003: 213). Babbie and Mouton (2002: 167) argue that, “snowball sampling is implemented by collecting data on the few members of the target population you can locate, and then asking those individuals to provide the information needed to locate other members of that population whom they happen to know”. Snowball sampling was used in this study, as it was not as

easy as the researcher had thought to gain access to respondents. Focus groups were used for data collection and will be discussed next.

### **3.4 Data collection: utilising focus group discussions**

Initially, the researcher intended to include some interviews with a few municipal officers but could not secure any interview, despite numerous attempts. The researcher got the impression that; the municipal officials were not willing to participate in this research, because of the sensitivity of the name change within the municipality.

Data gathering was done through focus groups. This technique was chosen rather than utilizing one-on-one interviews, because it was felt that by including up to eight persons in a discussion would be much cheaper and faster, as the researcher did not have operating funds for this project. Neuman (2003: 396) is of the opinion that the focus group setting allows and encourages participants to express their ideas freely, open discussion by participants is encouraged, and respondents may query one another and explain their answers to each other, as indeed was the case in this study. For example, some issues, such as the dominance of one group by another encouraged lengthy discussions between the focus group members, which was one of the limitations of the study. On the other hand, the study benefited from these lengthy discussions, because the researcher was able to get in-depth information and perceptions of respondents. In a one-on-one situation, the interviewee might feel intimidated or scared to say something to a total stranger (interviewer); hence the focus group was thought to be more appropriate. The other reason was that interviews are time consuming, and the researcher did not have the luxury of time because he was working full-time and studying part-time.

The researcher tried to make the respondents comfortable by telling them that no one should feel intimidated, as all of them were equally important for this

research, and that there were no wrong answers. A supportive environment was created to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view. The informal nature of the focus groups and its natural setting allows people to express opinions freely.

Four focus groups were used in this study, and they were constituted as follows: One group was made up of white residents, another group comprised black residents, a third group was a mixed race group, and the fourth group consisted of business owners operating in Pretoria Central. In overall the focus groups consisted of 29 respondents across 4 race groups who took part in the study. Members of these groups included 18 men and 11 women.

The first group, made up of white residents, had seven participants, two of which were female. The ages of the respondents in this group were between 31 and 45 years. Members of this group were relaxed and enjoyed sharing their ideas and perceptions. This group was the most vocal of all groups as they debated issues amongst themselves and expressed their opinions. Whenever some members of this group were not happy with what was said by one member, they would debate that particular issue at length. The dialogue between the participants was interesting as they debated their issues of concern. For example, the issue of their heritage and culture being ignored by the municipality was discussed at length.

The second group was a group of black residents made up of eight participants with a fairly homogeneous age structure and equal distribution in terms of gender. Participants in this focus group were aged between 31 and 45 years. This group had an insight into the politics of the municipality as they were aware of the latest developments in the municipal structure. Members of this group could freely express their views and opinions as they were comfortable with each other as members of the group.

The third group was made up of eight participants from different racial backgrounds. The researcher could say that this group was made up of young adults as their ages ranged between 22 and 30 years. In terms of gender, this group was balanced, because it had four female and four male participants. Although this group was made up of participants from different backgrounds, they seem to have a lot in common as they agreed about most of the issues discussed. For example, they agreed with each other that the municipality had disregarded the community in every respect when making crucial decision. Three members of this group were students at tertiary institutions around Pretoria.

The fourth group, made up of six business people, were persons with small to medium businesses, such as clothing stores, cell-phone shops, furniture shops, and food outlet stores. This group was male-dominated, as it had only one female participant. The ages of the participants in this group were between 25 and 54 years. Members of this group were very comfortable, and knew each other, as they usually meet from time to time for their Central Improvement District meetings.

As is the case with most focus groups, a schedule of questions was used to facilitate the discussion (see appendix). Questions were grouped into analytical themes\* which can be listed as follows:

- Public participation and decision making in the City of Tshwane
- Relationship with the municipality
- Name change
- Political motives behind the name change
- The way forward

Focus group discussions were held at different places, dates and times. One focus group discussion was held at Church Square in Pretoria, the other two at

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\* The similarities, differences and possible linkages of the above listed themes will be discussed individually in the next chapter.

Schubart Park Flats and lastly, one shop owner offered to host the group at his shop. The focus group discussions were held between the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2007. The discussions lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.

The device that was used to record focus group discussions was a Speed-Link PDR3 digital voice recorder. The researcher recorded the discussions with the full consent of the participants. The researcher came prepared with certain themes and questions that guided the discussion. Data analysis was done through coding, as discussed in the following section.

### **3.5 Coding**

The next phase in the methodological process is that of coding. In qualitative research, careful consideration must be given to the way in which the data is coded, so as to facilitate interpretation and analysis. With qualitative data, the researcher organizes the raw data into conceptual categories, and creates themes or concepts that can be used to analyze data (Neuman, 2003: 441).

In qualitative research, the coding is an integral part of data analysis, and it is guided by the research question and leads to further questions (Neuman, 2003: 441). Three types of data coding was relevant for this study (open, axial and selective coding). The researcher looked at the data three times, using a different type of coding each time.

Open coding is done to locate themes and assign initial codes or labels, in a first attempt to condense the mass of data into categories. Open coding allows the researcher to bring themes to the surface from deep inside the data. In this instance, the researcher tried to identify possible themes by looking at categories that came up in the data on numerous occasions. Themes emanated from the literature review and the data collected by the researcher.

Thereafter, axial coding involves the clustering of categories or concepts identified during open coding together. Here the focus is not only to stimulate thinking about linkages between themes or concepts, but on new information and new questions that need to be addressed. As a researcher consolidates codes and locates evidence, he or she finds evidence for core themes in many places, and builds a dense web of support for them in the qualitative data (Neuman, 2003: 444). The researcher discarded some themes identified in open coding, because they were not relevant, and looked at the core themes in a more detailed manner. By doing this, the researcher brought together related themes and examined them in more depth.

The final type of coding is selective coding. Here researchers selectively look for cases that illustrate themes and make comparisons after most or all data collection is complete. For example, we may want to see how the perceptions of white people differ from those of black people. In this case, we review and re-code our open code data so as to look specifically at race as indicated in this example above. The emphasis here is not on making final decisive statements, but rather on general statements that will be able to open the debate on the issues being discussed. In the case of this study, many forms and combinations were used, but the predominant method was that of axial coding. The reason for this is that the data was coded into broad themes which were used to do the analysis. In this way, themes and ideas are logically ordered in terms of the key concepts of analysis (Neuman 1997: 423). After coding of data was done, the next step was data interpretation, which will be discussed next.

### **3.6 Data interpretation**

Finally, in interpreting the data, the researcher must be able to answer the research questions and perhaps even to ask new questions which can serve as themes for stimulating new research. The interpretation will also include the researcher's explanation of the occurrence of the phenomena being investigated

and answering the questions set out in the beginning. Based on the interpretation of the findings, recommendations can be made for the enhancement of relationships between local government and communities, as well as recommendations, on the other hand, for local government on how to overcome their shortcomings.

In interpreting the findings, successive approximation was used. This is a process whereby the researcher moves from vague ideas and concrete details in the data toward a comprehensive analysis with generalizations, and then collects additional evidence to address unresolved issues that appeared in the first stage (Neuman, 2003: 451). As the analysis moves toward generalizations that are subject to conditions and contingencies, the researcher refines generalizations and linkages to better reflect the evidence. Thereafter, probing into the data was done and broad themes of discussion and analysis were identified. Additional evidence is then collected in order to complement the literature discussed earlier (Neuman, 1997: 427).

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

This study dealt with perceptions and experiences of individuals, and therefore ethical issues were considered during and after the research. The researcher assured the participants of anonymity and confidentiality, as a result their names were not used in the research. Of crucial importance is the fact that participation was voluntarily based on informed consent. The researcher informed the respondents about the fact that the data collected would be used for the purposes of obtaining his masters degree.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a discussion of the research methodology used during the fieldwork. A qualitative research design was chosen for this study. The sampling



technique was identified and explained in this chapter. In addition, data collection and interpretation were also discussed. Themes investigated during the fieldwork as well as research findings are discussed in the next chapter.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Perceptions and experiences with regard to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria: Research findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses the results of the study, and gives an indication of the perceptions and experiences of participants in respect to certain themes that are central to the study. Data relating to each theme was collected by means of questions posed during the focus group sessions. Among the findings of the research was the fact that the respondents were all unhappy with the manner in which the name change of Pretoria was conducted. It was also highlighted that the respondents have never participated in any mode of public participation and decision making in the municipality. First, a brief overview of the profile of the respondents will be given.

#### **4.2 Profile of the respondents**

Below is the table that provides a brief profile of respondents by focussing on the following biographical variables: age, gender, race, occupation, and place of residence.

Table1: *Respondents' profile*

<b>Focus groups</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Age category</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Place of work</b>	<b>Place of residence</b>
<b>White group</b>	7	5	2	31-45 years	White	Pretoria Central	Pretoria Central
<b>Black group</b>	8	4	4	31-45 years	Black	Pretoria Central	Pretoria Central
<b>Black and white group</b>	8	4	4	22-30 years	Black and white	Pretoria Central	Pretoria Central
<b>Business people</b>	6	5	1	25-54 years	All races	Pretoria Central	Other areas
<b>Total</b>	29	18	11				

Four focus groups were used for this study and they are as follows; white, black, black and white residents, and business people. The total number of people who participated in this research is 29. There were 18 male and 11 female participants. The first group had 5 male and 2 female participants, and the second group had 4 male and 4 female participants. The black and white group had 8 participants, with 4 male and 4 female participants. This group had 3 white people, 1 coloured person, and 4 black people. The last group had 6 participants made up of 5 males and 1 female participant. The business people group comprised of 3 Indians, 2 blacks, and 1 white person.

Out of the 29 respondents, 24 were residents of Pretoria Central, and the remaining 5 participants were business people who were residents in other areas. The employment status of the respondents was as follows; 6 business people, 3 university students, 13 employed either permanently or temporarily, and 7 unemployed people.

### **4.3 Presentation of results by themes**

Under this section, the research results will be presented in accordance with the themes identified earlier, and which can be listed as: public participation, relationship with the municipality, name change, political motives, and the way forward. The researcher was unable to secure interviews with the municipal officials, and therefore used an available report on how the council view public participation. A critical analysis of this report (Public participation in the IDP process of the Pretoria City Council, 2001) will also be given. A detailed thematic discussion of results, as seen by the respondents, which is in contradiction with the municipal views on public participation, will be given below.

#### **4.3.1 Public participation and decision making in the city of Tshwane**

Although the city of Tshwane claims to have a public participation and decision making process, referred to as the Ward Committee System, in which the public can participate, it has emerged through the focus groups that the Ward Committee System was not active. This has become evident as respondents, with the exception of business people, were not aware of this system. Each of these focus groups will be discussed below.

##### **(a) Focus group 1**

With regard to public participation, the white group thought that the only way for the public to participate in municipal affairs was through voting during election time. This group proceeded to say that they have never made any recommendations or submitted petitions to the municipality. One participant said,

“We don’t participate in municipal affairs because no one from the municipality told us about this public participation and decision making.”

One of the participants of this group suggested that the municipality should have sent them letters of notice regarding the public participation process. He went on to say that,

“They send us letters of demand and statements to pay for services and why not for such important matters.”

It was clear that the white group knew nothing about public participation and decision making in Tshwane. It emerged from the white group that the municipality was not doing anything to inform the public about public participation or public involvement in decision making. In South Africa, just like in many other countries, public participation is a legal requirement in respect of developments considered to have negative impacts, but the municipality did not comply with this requirement, and in the process created animosity between them and the communities. This group seemed not to be interested in the matters of the municipality, because they were of the opinion that municipal office bearers do whatever they want to do without consulting the affected communities.

#### (b) Focus group 2

As for the black group, they were not aware of public participation and decision making processes that were said to be in place, and consequently, they were convinced that these processes were non-existent. This group was concerned about the non delivery of services by the municipality, more especially in the black townships. The participants in this group agreed with each other that the riots in these townships were perpetuated by non-delivery of services such as proper housing, running water, and health care. One participant said,

“We have never been involved in any decision-making process in this municipality; they just impose on us what ever they have decided”.

The issue of non-delivery by the municipality was brought up time and time again by the black group. The respondents were of the opinion that something drastic needed to be done by the municipality in order to stop the escalation of the riots in the townships. It was evident that all the groups would participate voluntarily if they could be involved by the municipality. One member went on to say,

“We claim to have freedom but we are not free. This new democracy of ours is benefiting few certain individuals who are well-connected to the ruling party.”

The black group felt that not much has changed when compared with the rule of the apartheid government, as they have not benefited in terms of proper services from the municipality. They were of the opinion that important decisions were made on their behalf without consultation, and that they had therefore been deprived of their democratic right to express themselves. The opinion of this group was correct, because the municipality does make decisions without consulting the public. For example, the Pretoria News stated that the decision to re-name 27 streets in Pretoria was taken at the council meeting, and it is said that this functions falls within the municipality's jurisdiction (Masemola & Levanon: 2008). This provides support for Dahrendorf's argument that those in power wanted to remain in positions of authority in order to dominate the subordinates (Ritzer, 1988: 229). It is clear that the black group was not very happy about the way the municipality is conducting its business, as they felt that they were still left out of the processes that were supposed to empower them.

### (c) Focus group 3

The black and white group felt that the municipality has done nothing to encourage public involvement in decision-making in municipal affairs, because none of the participants of this group were ever invited to or were informed of any public participation meetings. One participant said,

“I have been living here for three years and have never heard or seen anything about public participation meeting that was conducted by the municipality.”

This group went on to say that they have never seen municipal officers doing consultations with the community members about any situation that might involve the people. A comment was made by one group member,

“Public participation might be available or done in other areas but we don’t have it here, it does not exist, period.”

It is clear that the Tshwane municipality is not doing anything, or very little, in terms of promoting public participation. Members of the black and white group stressed the fact that none of them has ever been invited to attend or has attended a public participation meeting. They felt that the municipal officers were not visible enough, and this could be caused by a number of reasons, for example lack of capacity within the municipality, or lack of commitment.

#### (d) Focus group 4

The group of business people highlighted that they are working with the municipality through the Central Improvement District (CID). The businesses are affiliated to the CID which represents them when there are issues that need to be addressed with the municipality. The Central Improvement District is a forum whereby business owners and landowner meet on a regular basis, to discuss whatever issues they might have in relation to the city, for example, cleaning of streets, security, crime, and any other issue that might be of concern to them. One participant said,

“Some of us know the developments in and around the city, but in terms of public participation and decision making, we are not involved at all.”

Another group member said that,

“The municipality should have involved all the community stakeholders in the process of public participation for the name change.”

The Central Improvement District represents affiliated businesses at municipal level, and therefore has an advantage to be aware of municipal projects underway. Lack of proper consultation is what was raised by the business people, who felt that the municipality needs to mobilize its resources when it comes to public participation. Craythorne (1997: 98) refers to public consultation as a process of communication between the government and the governed in dealing with the issue at hand, and this was definitely not the case in Tshwane before the re-naming of the city.

All the four groups concur with each other about the fact that they were not aware of any situation whereby proper consultation was done by the municipality before making the decision that would have negative impacts on communities and businesses. It is a shame to find out that not a single person amongst the respondents has ever taken part in the public participation process of the municipality, whereas the city council claims to have the process in place.

The study revealed that the municipality has all these processes like the IDP, ward committees, and ward councillors, which were created to try and encourage the involvement of communities in the affairs of local government. It turned out that these committees and processes were non-existent, hence the communities were not aware of the re-naming process of the city until they saw it in the newspapers after the decision to rename the city had been taken.

Ranney (1975: 307) argue that the concept of popular sovereignty requires basic government decision-making power to be vested in all members of the community and not in any particular person or ruling class. Since this would be



impossible in terms of practicality for our society, the decision-making powers are delegated with a degree of accountability. Popular sovereignty therefore comes from the premise of public participation which was not adhered to by the municipality. The non-involvement of communities in public participation processes resulted in a strained relationship with the municipality, which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.3.2 Relationship with the municipality**

The issue of community involvement in local governance is a critical one. Involvement and participation with and from the municipality must occur in a structured manner. The municipality needs to consult with the people in order to determine their needs and to build up a relationship of trust with the community. The government stipulates that the local government ward committees have been created as advisory bodies, comprising community representatives to channel community needs and recommendations to council (Government Gazette No. 32 of 2000 Local Government). This shows that the municipality has an idea of what should be done to enhance the relationship with the communities. The following discussion will give us an indication why the formation of a sustainable relationship between the municipality and the community failed to materialize.

##### **(a) Focus group 1**

The white group said they would like to participate in municipal matters but they were excluded. They said they would like to have their voices heard because there were many issues that needed to be addressed in the city itself. This group complained that they have never been visited by any councillor and they do not even know who their councillor is. One participant said,

“These people will come here when its election time and we will never see them again, which shows that they only want to be voted into the office and thereafter do nothing for the community.”

One group member said,

“We cannot have a sustainable relationship with the institution that does not care for its citizens. I don’t even know who our councillor is here.”

This group felt that the councillors and other municipal officers have no concern for the citizens but are only acting in their own interest, and that of their families. The white group was not happy about the fact that there was not even a single councillor that they know who lives among them.

#### (b) Focus group 2

The black group said that they would happily participate in the affairs of the municipality if invited to do so. As one person put it,

“If they had invited us to participate in the re-naming of the city, we would have participated in their meetings.”

This group expressed the same sentiments as the white group when it came to the visibility of the councillors. They said that their councillor was not visible at all, and that they have never conducted any public participation meetings. The black group further expressed their concerns about the councillors who are not residing within their constituencies, which usually lead to non-delivery in that particular area. One participant said,

“These councillors get elected into office and then move to live in their new mansions in the eastern suburbs of Pretoria.”

Eastern suburbs of Pretoria include areas like Garsfontein, Faerie Glen, Moreletta Park, Menlyn, and many others. The general perception that people have, is that residents of these suburbs are affluent people.

(c) Focus group 3

The black and white group felt that the relationship between councillors and the community is not a very good one. This group said the councillors are doing nothing in terms of uplifting the community. Some members of this group said that they did not know where to go when they want to lodge complaints about the municipal services. One member of the group said,

“We do not have any contact with our councillors because they never come to the community and we don’t know where to find them.”

The black and white group said that no one from the municipality had informed them about the name change, otherwise they would have participated. Just like the other two groups, members of this group did not know who their councillors were.

(d) Focus group 4

The business group was not happy about the fact that they have never been visited by any councillor. This group said that their relationship with the municipality was reasonable, as they are represented by the Central Improvement District. The business group was not pleased about the fact that they were not consulted about the re-naming of the city. As one participant said,

“We are the ratepayers and yet not consulted when the municipality is contemplating to change the name of the city. It’s a shame”.

This group went on to say that they do not think that there is conflict between the municipality and the community, as they have not witnessed any nasty incidents that could have been perpetuated by non-delivery of services in this area.

Although there has not been any reported incident in the city of rioting or protesting against municipality, judging by what has been said by the respondents. All the groups complained about the non-visibility of their councillors, and they did not even know who their councillors were. The groups were concerned about the councillors who were not staying within their constituencies, and therefore not knowing what the issues of concern were that affected the communities. In the literature review, it was stated that a ward councillor is directly elected to represent and serve the residents in a specific ward, and this means that the respondents did not participate in local government elections, as they did not even know who their councillor was. Based on perceptions and experiences of ward 3 residents, it is evident that some key principles of public participation process discussed in literature review were not adhered to, as there was no capacity building, transparency, or representation during the name change.

The IDP is the municipality's principal strategic planning investment, which is supposed to guide and inform all planning and developments that should take place, but the municipal office bearers do not follow the prescribed plans, which result in dissatisfaction on the part of community members. It was evident that, based upon the perceptions of the respondents in terms of public participation, the relationship between the municipality and the communities is non-existent. The members of the focus groups categorically made it clear that none of them have ever participated in a public participation meeting or decision-making process conducted by the municipality. This shows that the municipality has not done enough to build a relationship with the communities in this specific ward. This was evident when the municipality went through with the name change without consulting the communities, and more details will be discussed below.

Based on the findings of the study, it was clear that the municipality favoured representative democracy, as they did not make any effort to involve the community in the re-naming process of Tshwane. The elite are the representatives of the masses, and the welfare of the masses is their responsibility. Based on perceptions and experiences of ward 3 residents, it is clear that the municipality failed to perform its mandate, which is to encourage the involvement and active engagement of communities in the matters of local government.

#### **4.3.3 Name change**

This section focuses on different perceptions given by the focus groups about the name change. The focus groups were displeased with the manner in which the name change was conducted. The then Tshwane executive mayor Smangalisio Mkhathshwa said changing the name of Pretoria to Tshwane would confirm the demise of oppression and signal the advent of freedom. “By embarking on this process and project of transformation, our country is making a clear distinction between the old and the new, the past and the present” said Mkhathshwa (Slabbert, 2003).

##### **(a) Focus group 1**

As far as the name change of Pretoria to Tshwane is concerned, the white group felt that they were not consulted at all, and there was no advertisement for public involvement for the name change. This group was totally against the name change, and felt that it was a waste of money. This was illustrated by one participant, who said,

“People are sleeping outside in the cold and yet the municipality is spending money on name change, instead of building houses and buying food for the poor”.

This group was concerned about the name change, because they said their history was being destroyed and that it would have negative impacts for tourism. The same concern expressed by this group was also highlighted by the public in Durban in The Independent newspaper when their municipality changed the street names. Their concern was that with the street name changes the city would not be tourism friendly (Goldstone, 2008). One person asked a question,

“Why are they destroying our history and heritage?”

Another person in the group said,

“That is my problem as well, because people from overseas know Pretoria as the capital city of South Africa and now all of a sudden, they are changing the name”.

This indicated that the name change could confuse the tourists and other people who are not familiar with the area.

Furthermore, the white group strongly felt that the name change was purely a political issue between black and white people. They were of the opinion that black people wanted to get back at white people for the things the apartheid government did to black people. The white group said that this was about scores to be settled. This group felt that their history and heritage was being destroyed without their even being consulted. There are some similarities between the respondents' concerns and those expressed by the members of the joint campaign, known as Action Pretoria Street Names (APS) who were involved in an initiative for the retention of street names with specific cultural and historical significance (Magome, 2008).

This group emphasized that black politicians wanted to display how powerful they were when it came to decision making. Dahrendorf is of the opinion that the local elite always has a desire to monopolise power by using a combination of positions such as race, gender, and from time to time backed by tradition, to prevent meaningful participation from occurring (Ritzer, 1988: 228). This can be aligned to what happened with the name change, because the municipal executive of Tshwane took the decision to change the name, without consulting the communities, and thereby monopolising and abusing the power that they have. This group said they only saw in the newspapers and heard on the news that the name will be changed from Pretoria to Tshwane. The same thing happened with the street re-naming in Durban, where Sipho Cele, the city manager, conceded that the city only advertised in print media for submissions of name changes (Stolley, 2007). This shows that they excluded communities who cannot read, and those who do not have access to or do not buy the specific newspapers. It is clear that the rights of these communities to participate in municipal matters were infringed upon by the municipality.

#### (b) Focus group 2

The black group also felt that they were never consulted as far as the name change of Pretoria was concerned. But, unlike their white counterparts, this group supported the name change, as they thought it reflected the true demographics of the city. Even though the respondents supported the name change, they felt that they would have wanted to be part of the decision-making process. One participant said,

“Pretoria is an apartheid name and it is time to change it because we are in the new democracy.”

This group had, however, a problem with the money that would be used for the name change and felt that the money should be re-allocated for some basic needs like housing. As a result one participant said,

“I wish the millions of rand that are used for the name change could be used for community development, because people are suffering out there.”

The black group did not have a problem with the name change except for the manner in which it was done and the amount of money that was involved. They felt that the new name (Tshwane, which allegedly is the name of the King who once lived in the region) represented the majority of the people in the city and therefore in that sense the name change was necessary. This group favoured the name change, but were mostly concerned about the manner in which it was conducted. This sentiment was also expressed by the members of the public in renaming of streets in Durban, and they said that they were not opposed to the renaming but the process (Stolley, 2007). One person was quoted by The Independent newspaper saying he was not against the name changes but felt they needed to be dealt with properly and not in manner that antagonised people (Goldstone, 2008).

### (c) Focus group 3

The black and white group echoed the same sentiments as the white and black groups, by emphasizing that they came to know about the name change through the media. As a result they were not impressed, and felt that the municipality should have involved the public in a more meaningful manner. The black and white group was of the opinion that the municipality took away the dignity of the people by not involving them in the decision-making process of the name change, as it affected them. One participant said,

“The municipality showed no respect for its citizens by unilaterally changing the name, and to them we are incapable of making informed decisions.”



Another participant said,

“No official announcement was made about the name change, we only saw it in the newspapers.”

(d) Focus group 4

The business group was adamant that there was no public involvement in the re-naming process of Pretoria, because they also saw in the newspapers that the name has been changed. A similar situation was highlighted by the media in Durban because one company manager in Durban said he had not even been aware that the street of his company had been changed (Makhaye, 2008). Peter Criticos, who also owns a business in Durban, said he did not care much about the name change as long as it did not affect his business (Goldstone, 2008). The business group said they were not really affected by the name change. One participant said,

“Who cares if they change the name or not, we are continuing with our business as usual.”

The business group was of the opinion that the demographics of the population in the City of Pretoria showed that the name change represented the majority of the people. One person said,

“You know what? Even if a referendum could be done, the name ‘Tshwane’ would still remain because the majority of people favour the name.”

There seemed to be consensus amongst the four groups in that the municipality did not conduct any public participation meetings before the name could be changed from Pretoria to Tshwane. All the groups were not happy with the manner in which the whole process of decision-making and name change was

conducted, because they felt that none of them was consulted. What made matters worse, was the fact that all the respondents in the focus groups heard through the media that the name has been changed.

It was evident that the four focus groups were concerned about the money that was used for the name change. The message was that the money could have been used for more basic needs like housing, water, health, and other things. The kind of money that was used for the name change could have been used to create jobs, as there are many people who are unemployed as the unemployment rate is at 31,7 percent according to Tshwane IDP document, and this on the other hand could reduce the level of crime. The members of the community who attended the meeting about the renaming of streets in Pretoria also raised the concern about the cost implications of the renaming exercise (Magome, 2008).

It was clear that, if the respondents had been approached to take part in public participation about the name change they would have participated willingly. More information needs to be disseminated about public participation and what it aims to achieve, so that community participation could be enhanced and increased. The hastily manner in which the name change was done suggests that there were political motives behind the whole process, and these will be looked at in the next section.

Although the municipality has procedural guidelines to be adhered to for the naming of public places but surprisingly based on respondents' perceptions, the council did not adhere to those guidelines because the name (Tshwane) was never presented to them as is supposed to the case. Based on perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, it was evident from the study that neither consultation nor involvement was done in Tshwane during the re-naming process. This led respondents to believe that behind the name change there were political motives, which will be discussed next.

#### **4.3.4 Perceived political motives behind the name change**

The focus groups suspected that the name change was a ploy implemented by political parties to achieve whatever they wanted to do at that stage. This section looks at what the people think was the reason behind the name change. Different perceptions about the political motives behind the name change are given.

##### **(a) Focus group 1**

Participants in the white group felt that the whole process about re-naming of towns and public places was about the government showing its political power. This group was of the opinion that the government is changing almost everything in 'the name of new South Africa'. One participant went on to say that,

“They even erected a stature of King Tshwane at the City Hall without consulting the public.”

The white group was not happy with the deployment of politicians from other areas to their municipality, because they said those politicians do not have the needs of the community at heart. They went on to say that the politicians will always advance the needs of their political parties before those of communities.

The white group strongly felt that the politicians who were deployed to local government wanted to make a name for themselves and to gain popularity amongst their comrades. They were of the opinion that the name change was not necessary and the municipality could use the money better for basic commodities. One participant stated that,

“The municipality sees that people are suffering, but they are not doing anything about it.”

The white group was not happy with the fact that the government is changing the names of towns, streets, and public places. They see this as if the history and culture of the minority is destroyed and, above all, that they have no say in the whole process. One participant expressed his unhappiness and said,

“The re-naming process was not done properly as there was no consultation with the public.”

The white group concluded that even if consultation could take place in relation to re-naming of towns, the recommendations by the public would not be considered, because the politicians and municipalities have to pursue the needs of their political parties. Mail and guardian reported that during the renaming of streets in Durban the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) urged the municipality to resort to renaming only in exceptional instances in the interests of national reconciliation and healing. IFP also accused the African National Congress (ANC) of diverting attention from the real task of transformation (Stolley: 2007).

#### (b) Focus group 2

The black group felt that the name change was just a political matter. They echoed what was said by the white group, because they said the government wanted to prove to white people that they are ruling the country. As one person puts it,

“Our leaders are black and they want to prove to white people that this is our time.”

The black group felt that the councillors and the municipality at large are not doing enough to educate the communities about public participation. They also expressed their unhappiness about the non-visibility of the councillors. One member complained that,

“We only see these people when its time for municipal elections and never again”.

The black group was concerned about the fact that the only time one sees councillors is during or just before the elections, when they come to campaign. Based on what was said by the respondents, it was evident that the communities were “on their own” because when they needed their councillors, they were “nowhere to be found”. The respondents were under the impression that the needs of the community are not a priority to elected officials. The black group was of the opinion that the municipal officers were there to pursue the needs of their political parties and were sacrificing the needs of the communities in the process.

#### (c) Focus group 3

The black and white group echoed what was said by both the white and the black groups. They were of the opinion that the name change was a highly politicized issue, and that it was about showing who has the last word amongst the political parties.

Members of this group felt that the name change was politicized to achieve cultural dominance by black people over white people. For example, they stated that most of the public holidays in the calendar were meant to pay tribute to black people rather than to white people.

They were of the opinion that the name change could bring conflict between these two groups (black and white), because it appears as if the name relates more to black people than it does to white people. The black and white group felt that the re-naming of street and towns was about showing political dominance of one group by the other which could lead to political intolerance. Indeed, what this group anticipated happened in a public meeting for the renaming of streets in

Pretoria, where argument ensued and chairs thrown at each other by different race groups.

(d) Focus group 4

The business owners group also felt that the issue of the name change has been politicized and the politicians just wanted to be popular. They said the name change was just due to political ambitions. They were concerned about the fact that no public involvement was conducted for the name change, whereas the history of the city was at stake. One participant said,

“It seems as if our municipality is spending too much time on petty issues like name changes instead of focusing on issues that really concern the communities.”

The business owners group felt that the municipality is not doing enough to uplift the communities. The municipality is spending money and resources focusing on minor issues instead of concentrating on serious matters (like shortage of houses) that affect the communities.

Political activity and creation of a tolerable climate are important factors in developing a democracy and in developing a community at socio-political level. All the groups agreed to the fact that the name change was a political matter which was pursued by one political party to demonstrate its dominance. Masango (2001: 65) is of the opinion that only a few members of any institution are actively involved and influential in functioning of that particular institution, and therefore they constitute an elite that fulfil the doctrines of democracy by indirect participation of the people. The respondents were of the view that the motive of all politicians is to push the interests of their political parties. According to the Mail & Guardian, the IFP leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had warned the ANC against honouring only its own liberation fighters in its renaming drive in Durban. He was further quoted as saying, ‘It seems to me that freedom fighters who did

not hail from the same stable as the ruling party are being given scant consideration' (Stolley, 2007).

As indicated in the study, the non-consultation of the communities by the municipality was unacceptable because they implemented the name change for their political egos and not for the people.

The respondents of these focus groups still had some hope about their municipality, because they came up with some suggestions as to how they would like to see the municipality going forward and improving people's lives.

#### **4.3.5 The way forward**

Under this section, respondents' views were captured on how the municipality should conduct its business when it comes to public participation and decision making. All the respondents of the focus groups were dissatisfied with the way in which the process of the name change was conducted. They felt that there was no effort made by the municipality to involve communities in this process.

##### **(a) Focus group 1**

The white group felt that the municipality needs to improve its communication strategies, because the community is not aware of what is happening in their city. This group would like to encourage the municipality to educate the communities about public participation in decision making that could affect a particular community. They said the municipality should have functions, public speaking, and media shows that would involve the communities so that they could be empowered and knowledgeable about what is going on in their city. One participant said that,

“Community empowerment is a very key issue at local government level, and therefore the municipality should devise some meaningful strategies

to make sure that communities are fully involved in public participation and decision making.”

(b) Focus group 2

The black group felt that some municipal officers, including the councillors, need to undergo customer service training. This group proposed that the municipality should consult the communities on all matters that affect them, either positively or negatively so that they could voice their concerns. They also suggested that at least such matters should be communicated in all languages spoken in the area, so that no one would be left out of the participatory processes. The black group strongly felt that the public’s opinion should be taken into consideration when the municipality makes decisions, more especially if these decisions will affect the communities.

“We have voted these people into office, the only thing they could do before making critical decisions is to consult their constituencies for deliberations on those issues.”

(c) Focus group 3

The mixed group wanted the municipality to know that change is good under the new dispensation, but it must not come at the expense of others, and everyone should be accommodated. This group suggested that the municipality should uplift communities by involving them in community projects. The mixed group was of the opinion that, if communities were involved in local projects, they would have a sense of ownership for those projects and that this would encourage them to guard against vandalism and may even reduce crime. The mixed group would also like to see their councillors and municipal officers more often, and to exchange ideas with them in formal and informal forums.



#### (d) Focus group 4

The business group would like to see the municipality create more jobs for the people, so that the economy of the city could grow. This could also reduce the crime rate, because more people will have jobs and will be able to feed their families. The business group also felt that crime levels could be drastically reduced if the Metro police officers could be given more powers like their counterpart in South African Police Services (SAPS) to arrest people who break the law. This group seemed to be more concerned about stability and order in the city.

It was clear that all the focus groups would like to see communities more involved in decision-making processes of the municipality. Community empowerment is one of the key issues that all the groups would like to see pursued by the municipality.

#### **4.3.6 Comparison between the research findings and views of people about street re-naming**

Pretoria News reporters Masemola and Levanon, 2008 sought the views of people\*\* walking the streets, whose names might be changed, and the responses are listed below:

- John Gouws, 34, believes the money for street name changes would be better spent on the police, health services, and the Gautrain.
- But Thembeleng McDonald, 42, said name changes were necessary: "(It's) about time that the city started changing for the people."
- Most pedestrians said the changing of street names was pointless and a waste of money which could be used for more urgent causes.

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\*\* The names of the people mentioned below were published in the Pretoria News.

- Andre Erwee, 52, said the money should be spent on education, housing, and fixing infrastructure that doesn't work.
- Rexon Myathi, 51, and Paulina Serota, 52, agreed.
- Nyathi said even though the names of the streets may be remnants of apartheid, they were still part of the city and its history, and changing them would be an unnecessary endeavour.
- Serota thinks changing the street names is unnecessary.

After having seen a heated debate about street re-naming process in the media, the researcher decide to compare his findings and the views of the people who were interviewed by the Pretoria News about the street re-naming. This exercise showed that there were a lot of similarities between the findings and the views of the people interviewed. Just like the feedback reported by Pretoria News, the research findings indicate that most of people who participated in this study were totally against the name change because of high cost implications. They were also of the opinion that the money should be channelled to the most basic necessities like housing, poverty alleviation, health, clean water, and so on.

#### **4.3.7 Content analysis: Public participation report in the integrated development planning (IDP) of local government in Pretoria**

In their report about public participation in Pretoria, Gregory Houston and his colleagues argued that integrated development planning (IDP) in the Pretoria City Council has given rise to community participation that is representative of all stakeholders (Houston *et al.*, 2001: 226). The community participation structures were formed by dividing the city into 11 planning zones on the basis of functionality, cohesion, and general practical considerations. The municipality is

of the opinion that the IDP process led to the establishment of communication links between the community and the City Council. The public participation programme increased the understanding of how local government works among members of the community. Benefits of public participation in Pretoria are said to be as follows:

- It enables the community to be a major stakeholder in determining the vision and objectives for development in the municipal area.
- It promotes capacity-building in communities
- It increases the potential for enhancing relations between the City Council and the community.

Although the Council believes that the IDP process has led to the establishment of a working relationship between communities and the City Council, the researcher totally disagrees with this assertion. Based on responses of residents and business owners in Pretoria Central, this research has proven otherwise, and the respondents did not even know who to consult when they had problems in their areas. This proved that the good relationship the municipality referred to was non-existent. The council also alleged that the understanding of public participation among community members had increased. This again was not true because, the respondents were not aware of any public participation programmes, and they have never been involved in any public participation process. Again, the council talked about the benefits of public participation, whereas the community have never benefited in any kind of public participation.

The most significant benefit of community participation in the IDP process was seen to be the opportunity it presented for ordinary citizens to influence the planning processes of local government structures. The researcher believed that the council has all these ideas about public participation and how it should be done and how it can benefit the communities if done properly. But, their problem is to implement all these ideas, because they do not have the capacity to do it. After having seen the perspective of the municipal council and what people on

the streets said about in terms of public involvement, the researcher will now discuss the conclusion.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the researcher wishes to reflect back on the aims of the study and see what has been achieved in this regard. The first aim was about a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents and business owners with regard to the impact the re-naming of the City of Pretoria may have on them. In the first instance, there seems to be a very negative perception regarding the manner in which the re-naming process was conducted. Participants in the focus groups mentioned that the municipality had made no effort to involve them in the public participation process, which illustrates the municipality's lack of application and a total disregard of the community.

Most respondents mentioned that they would like to be included in public participation and decision-making processes, but they were not aware of when these were taking place, or where, or who the contact person was. It was clear that the community needed to be kept informed about the activities taking place within the municipality. Some participants were of the opinion that the name change from Pretoria to Tshwane may have a negative impact for the city, as there are many stakeholders that will be affected. For example, the name change will have a negative impact on the tourism industry, because tourists might be confused by the new name (Tshwane) and the businesses on the other hand will have their operational costs increased as they will need to change their letterheads and other documents. The economic growth of the city is being compromised, because millions of rand are channelled to the name change project, instead of being diverted to other social aspects, such as housing, health care, job creation, and many others. Beeld estimated that to change Pretoria's name to Tshwane would cost more than R1 billion, which many residents

believed should rather be used to build houses and create jobs (Slabbert, 2005). This point was also raised by the respondents, and they were concerned about the money that would be used for the name change.

The second aim was to focus on the extent to which Pretoria Central residents and business owners feel that they had been given the opportunity to participate in discussions related to the re-naming of the city. There was a belief amongst the respondents that a newly elected government would do much better than the previous government when it comes to community involvement. People were not involved at all in the re-naming of the city, and this is not acceptable when the country's constitution promotes or prescribes public participation.

All the focus groups were dissatisfied with the way the municipality is conducting its business, more especially when it comes to community involvement. People have had enough of empty promises made by politicians when campaigning for elections. People want to see service delivery.

According to Mpondo (2004), the government feels that its success will be measured by its ability to uplift communities on their own, which is why perhaps they will embark on projects without consultation, but merely for the sake of saying that something has been done. It is clear that the lack of experience in positions of leadership, especially in local government, has led to people abusing power and money in order to enrich themselves, because such opportunities were denied to them in the past.

The overview of the study and recommendations are dealt with in a more detailed manner in the next and final chapter.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the research conducted, and gives recommendations based on the findings. Limitations of the study and what could stimulate further research are also dealt with. This minor dissertation concentrated on the issue of public participation with special reference to the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. The objective of this study, as discussed in chapter one, is to understand the impacts of the re-naming of the city in relation to perceptions and experiences of the residents of the City of Tshwane. The re-naming of the City of Pretoria is one specific issue at a local government level. Reports in the media about the re-naming of the City of Pretoria have created public interest and expressions of concern by specifically constituencies and businesses. These groups have expressed their dissatisfaction about the way the matter has been handled (Hlahla, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, public participation in relation to conflict theory was defined and reviewed as relevant to this study. In reviewing the literature on public participation it has emerged that public participation is not a new phenomena, it started gathering steam in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, more especially in the United States of America. South Africa started to embrace public participation after the first democratic elections in 1994.

The researcher is of the opinion that Tshwane Municipality is not doing enough to educate communities about public participation; hence people are not involved in decision-making processes in this municipality. Conflict theories maintain that

those in positions of authority and those in positions of subordination hold certain interests that are “contradictory in substance and direction” (Ritzer, 1988: 229). This is evident in this study, as the municipality has imposed the name change on the communities and thereafter did not allow them to participate in the re-naming process. This led to conflict between the municipality and the communities. In this chapter, the following will briefly be discussed by means of an overview, aims of the study, methodology, summary of the findings, recommendations, limitations of the study, and the conclusion.

## **5.2 Aims of the study**

This study aimed at bringing about a better understanding of:

- The perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents and business owners with regard to the impact the re-naming of the City of Pretoria may have on them.
- The extent to which Pretoria Central residents and business owners feel that they have been given the opportunity to participate in discussions related to the re-naming of the city.

For the research questions to be answered, data had to be collected, and the methodology below was used for this purpose.

## **5.3 Methodology**

In order to gather data to answer the research questions, a qualitative methodological approach was used. The contributing factor in choosing qualitative approach was the level of depth that the researcher went into when he was studying the responses of the respondents. Data was gathered by means of focus group discussions. There were four focus groups, which comprised of Pretoria Central residents and business owners within the city. These focus groups were divided into white, black, black and white, and business owners groups. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify

participants for this study. The following section gives a brief summary of the research findings.

#### **5.4 Summary of the findings**

Although the municipality claims to have a public involvement process, based on the perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents it is clear that this process was non-existent or was not properly implemented by the municipality, as none of the respondents has ever been involved in any form of public participation. Participation of citizens in local level decision making through active involvement in formal structures or through organized pressure groups, as part of civil society, is something that is not easy to achieve and sustain. This can be explained by the desire of local elite to monopolize power and their hostility to widespread participation. This has always been an attempt on their part to implement top-down strategies, which does not enjoy much popular support (Clapper, 1993: 52). In the case of this study, the municipality implemented the top-down strategies as they did not consult the communities about the name change.

The main aim of the study was to establish people's perceptions and experiences regarding the level of their involvement in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria. The study unveiled the following:

Conflict theories emphasize the dominance of some social groups by others; see social order as based on manipulation and control by a dominant group as was the case in this study because the municipality clearly manipulated and dominated the communities. Conflict theories maintain that society is held together by "forced constraint". This means that some positions in society are delegated power and authority over others. This fact of social life led Dahrendorf to his central thesis that the differential distribution of authority "invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflicts" (Ritzer, 1988: 201). This sentiment of Dahrendorf is evident in the findings because the



municipal officials have the power and authority over the communities and as a result this led to conflict because the municipality did not involve the communities in any kind of public participation before the name change.

The study shows that the respondents were negative about the manner in which the name change of the City of Pretoria was conducted. They felt that the municipality should have consulted them on this issue as it impacted on them in one way or another. Based on perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, it is clear that the municipality was not transparent on this issue, whereas according to one of the key principles as discussed in the literature review, it was their duty to be transparent with all the role players in a public participation process, which was not conducted.

Most respondents were of the opinion that the municipality did not make any effort to consult or inform them about the name change, and this angered them. The municipality claimed to have methods of public participation in place, but it is clear from the study that the municipality did not implement any of the public participation methods it had to its disposal.

Ward committees were created at municipal level as advisory bodies for channelling of community needs and recommendations to the council. Dahrendorf argued that those in positions of authority and those in positions of subordination hold certain interests that are “contradictory in substance and direction” (Ritzer, 1988: 229). The study has proved this, because based on perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, it was evident that the members of these ward committees were just there for their own gain and were not benefiting the communities. The community members did not even know who the members of these ward committees were, and were also not clear about the role the ward committees in society.

The research results were presented according to the themes that were identified earlier in the study and can be listed as: public participation and decision making, relationship with the municipality, name change, political motives and the way forward. Under public participation and decision making, all four focus groups agreed with each other that they were not aware of any situation whereby public participation was done by the municipality before making any major decision that would have impacts on communities and businesses. In terms of the relationship with the municipality it was evident that based on the perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents the relationship the municipality and the communities was non-existent. It was clear that the municipality did not do enough to build a relationship with the Pretoria Central residents. The third theme is the name change and under this theme the respondents were more concerned about the money that would be used for this process. All the respondents were of the view that the money could be used for basic needs like housing, health, water and other things. For the fourth theme all the respondents anonymously agreed that the name change was driven by political motives by one party to show its dominance. The last theme dealt with the way in which the respondents would like to see the municipality in terms of public participation and this led the researcher to his recommendations.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, it is evident that a problem exists in the Tshwane Municipality, more especially with public participation, and therefore something must be done to correct this. The researcher suggested the following recommendations:

- Citizens should be allowed to play a significant role in the planning process of the municipality. The ward councillors should make sure that the suggestions made during the integrated development planning (IDP)

process should be taken cognisance of, as this is the only way that the communities could participate in municipal planning.

- The councillors should not be allowed to reside outside the boundaries of their constituencies, so that they could be easily accessible to the communities they serve. The study has proved that most respondents did not know who their councillors were, making it difficult for them to report any problems that they have in the community.
- Communication strategies should be enhanced in order to reach all spheres of the community. It is clear from the study that the municipality is lacking in the field of communication because their strategies could not reach the intended audience for public participation in the re-naming of the City of Pretoria.
- Community outreach programmes should be implemented. The municipality should make sure that the communities are educated about what the municipality is doing and what should be done if community members need some help.
- The municipality should ensure that ward committees are active, so that community members would be able to voice their concerns. Ward committee members are supposed to represent the communities and therefore should attend the community meetings and make sure that their concerns are heard and responded to by the municipality.
- The municipality should establish a working relationship with civic societies, ratepayers' organizations, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations, in order to work harmoniously with the communities.
- There is a need for citizen education around public participation in legislative processes and the need to minimize the impact of attitudinal reasons for non-participation by communities.
- Actions should be taken to avoid the danger of marginalising the communities through ignorance of their right to participate in democratic processes.

## **5.6 Limitations of the study**

South Africa is still a young democratic country and therefore not much research has been done on public participation. This was a challenge for the researcher as it was not easy to get literature on public participation based on South African studies.

The researcher was also faced with the challenge of accessing information from the municipality as this study dealt with a very sensitive topic, according to them. For example, the researcher could not get access to the “Pretoria re-naming report” as it was not made available to the public.

The study had a small number of cases. There were only four focus groups, but the aim of the study was not to generalize, but rather to get an in-depth account of people’s perceptions. Sometimes generalizations do have some dangers, especially if the target population was not properly represented in the sample. A non-representative sample will be problematic, as it will result in someone making inaccurate generalizations.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Based on perceptions and experiences of Pretoria Central residents, it is evident that the municipality has failed in terms of public participation. But, based on findings in the previous chapter, it is clear that public participation can no longer be avoided by the municipality. The literature showed that there is not much research done on public participation in South Africa. It is clear that there is a need for further research on public participation in this country, more specifically in relation to municipal public participation. Municipal officials should be well informed about public participation and its benefits. The municipality should

realise that the communities know what is best for them, and therefore should give them the opportunity to decide what they want.

The strategy of the municipality imposing the name change on the community shows that there was no public participation conducted, as the municipality wanted to rush the process and be done with it. Public participation is the process with which to drive the goal of sustainable development, but it is meaningless if proper public participation strategies are not employed, as was the case with Tshwane Municipality. Opponents of change often argue that changing names today, especially those honouring people, is simply repeating the mistakes of the past, and that the names will be changed back again afterwards (Jenkins, 2007:195).

The most common argument heard against name changes is that the money should rather be spent on more urgent needs, such as alleviating poverty or improving infrastructure in disadvantaged areas. This was also evident in this study, because most respondents were concerned about the amount of money that would be used, and agreed to the fact that the money should rather be used for basic needs.

Ultimately, the ruling political party at local, provincial, and national level has its way. Unfortunately the process has often been hurried and the prescribed procedures have been either pre-empted or ignored. This gives aggrieved parties the impression, correctly in some cases that changes have been bulldozed through. This has been supported by the reports in the media which suggested that the ANC was accused of simply bulldozing its own name change suggestions through the executive committee and the council (Goldstone, 2008). Changing place names can be divisive, and if that is how it is going to be done in South Africa, those pleading for caution do have a point. Democracy should not mean the majority takes all, but that the interests of the minorities are respected as well.

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# **Appendix**

## **Questionnaire schedule**

The researcher prepared a list of questions which were used as a guide for the group discussions. These questions are listed below:

- What do you understand by public involvement in municipal affairs?
- Has anybody participated in public participation or made any recommendations to officials or councillors of the city of Tshwane?
- How did the municipality involve you in the re-naming of Pretoria to Tshwane?
- How do you feel about the name change and why?
- How did the name change affect you?
- Has your community ever been visited by a local councillor, in order to discuss the problems faced by your community?
- What would you say should be done to ensure that adequate public involvement occurs in the city of Tshwane?
- How would you describe the current status of public involvement in decision-making in Tshwane municipality?
- Are you aware of the existence and functioning of the public participation office in your municipality?

- How should the municipality engage communities to participate in municipal affairs? (What are your suggestions?)
- Do you know any situation where the public was involved in decision making?
- Do you feel that there is any conflict between municipal officers and the community members?
- What do you think are the reasons behind the name change?
- How did you know that the name will be changed from Pretoria to Tshwane?

